

Trachycarpus fortunei: Windmill Palm¹

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Introduction

The erect, single trunk of Windmill Palm is covered with dense, brown, hairlike fibers, and the three-foot-wide, fan-shaped fronds extend from 1.5-foot-long, rough-edged petioles. The trunk appears to be wrapped in burlap. A very slow-growing palm, Windmill Palm can reach 40 feet in height but is often seen much smaller, 10 to 20 feet tall. Windmill Palm works well as a framing tree, accent, specimen, patio or urn subject. It is ideal for use as an accent in a shady shrub border or by a front entryway. It does well in confined areas and is hardy to 10-degrees F. or lower.

General Information

Scientific name: *Trachycarpus fortunei*

Pronunciation: tray-kee-KAR-pus FOR-too-nee-eye

Common name(s): Windmill Palm

Family: *Arecaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 8A through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: indoors; deck or patio; specimen; container or planter

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 10 to 20 feet

Spread: 6 to 10 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: palm, upright/erect

Crown density: open

Growth rate: slow

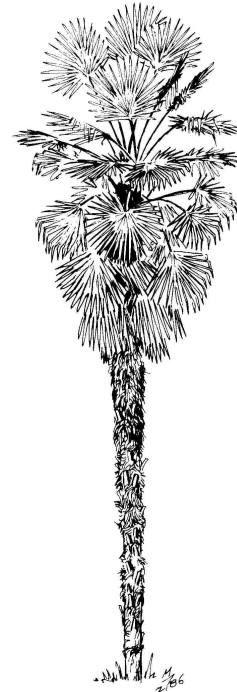


Figure 1. Mature *Trachycarpus fortunei*: Windmill Palm

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: star-shaped

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen, evergreen

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Figure 2. Range

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow, white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch, .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: blue

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: not applicable

Current year twig thickness:

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: partial sun or partial shade, shade tolerant

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Windmill Palm should be grown in shade or partial shade on fertile soil to look its best, but it is also tolerant of full sun on well-drained soils when given ample moisture in the northern part of its range. Plants should be watered faithfully. Protection from harsh winds will minimize leaf tearing, but plants can be used successfully close to the shore, being quite tolerant of salt and wind. There are fine examples of mass plantings where palms are spaced six to 10 feet apart around a patio or sitting area. They have also been used very successfully lining an entry walk to a large building. This adds a formal elegance to any structure, especially one with a glass facade.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests

Scales and palm aphids are pests of Windmill Palm.

Diseases

Windmill Palm may be infected by root rot, moderately susceptible to lethal yellowing disease, and leaf spots.